

# VFW, Senate Leaders Key in Axing Widow's Tax in New NDAA

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**WASHINGTON** – After a nearly half-century long fight, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and its veterans service and survivor organization partners claimed victory with the termination of the contentious and embattled Military Widow’s Tax as part of the presidential signing of the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act today.

“This is a momentous victory for the more than 65,000 military spouses who endured the tragic loss of their husband or wife who paid the ultimate sacrifice,” said VFW National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz. “Without these extraordinary spouses fighting in the trenches with us, the termination of the Widow’s Tax may not have been possible.”

Prior to today’s presidential signing of the NDAA that included the Military Widow’s Tax Elimination Act of 2019, recipients of both the Department of Defense Survivors Benefits Plan (SBP) and the Department of Veterans Affairs Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) faced a reduction of \$1,319 – the current payout for DIC benefits. For many survivors, this offset completely eliminated their SBP payments and threatened their financial security.

“There is no justifiable reason why money should have ever been stripped away from our military spouses,” said Schmitz.

The VFW led the first SBP/DIC Offset Roundtable in May with other veterans’ service organizations, congressional staffers, and widows and widowers to create a legislative campaign to eliminate the nearly half-century old Widow’s Tax.

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Soon, surviving spouses of troops will keep their SBP payments, even if they are eligible for DIC.

VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Kyle Kalman said the signing of the FY2020 NDAA rights a wrong for our military widows and widowers.

“We commend senatorial and congressional leadership and the coalition of veterans and survivor organizations who fought alongside us for their commitment to the 65,000 surviving military spouses who were unjustly forced to endure a dollar-for-dollar offset of their Survivor Benefit Plan payments and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation,” said Kalman. “Our military widows and widowers deserved this victory.”